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JOURNAL

OF THE

AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION

The Association is not responsible, as a body, for the facts and opinions advanced in any of the papers or discussions published in its proceedings.

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COMMENTS

GROWTH OF THE ASSOCIATION

Every member of the American Water Works Association will be glad to have the following news from the chairman of the Membership Committee:

I have received during the past few days, more than fifty applications for membership in the Association. I am very much pleased with the very evident interest in the Association and the great interest manifested in our JOURNALS. These applications have come from public utility commissions, state boards of health, high-grade consulting engineers, water-works superintendents, and so forth, and I believe that the larger number of these men will remain as permanent members.

This gratifying evidence of the interest aroused by the efforts of the Executive Committee to make the Association of the maximum value to all interested in supplying water to our cities also imposes an obligation upon the members of the organization. We are asking men to join our ranks because we believe that membership in this body will be useful to them; we are not asking them to join merely as contributors to a small annual income used for purposes which will not be helpful to them. Every member of the organization, by the fact of his membership, assumes a certain measure of responsibility for its work. He is not a mere stockholder in a company in which he

invests in the hope of monetary profit alone, but he is a member of an association in which all are equal partners in striving to accomplish one thing, supplying wholesome water at minimum expense.

The Association will continue to grow in influence and numbers so long as all members of it will coöperate in making it of the greatest service to the greatest number. The officers of the Association will be able to do better work if the members write freely to them about those things they will be glad to have done and their criticisms of the things that have been done. In matters of general policy members should write to the executive committeemen from the districts where they live, in order that they may know the members' views and, if they consider it desirable, secure the opinions of other members in these districts. Membership subjects should be taken up with the chairman of the Membership Committee, whose active work is proving so successful. Matters relating to the JOURNAL should be taken up with the editor, who keeps the Publication Committee informed of all matters relating to the Association's publication. The addresses of these officers are given in the list of members and will be printed hereafter on the back of the flyleaf of each JOURNAL. They wish most earnestly to receive suggestions from the members about any subject relating to water works design, construction and management which interests them.

There is at the present time one subject to which each member should give careful thought, for without expressions of opinion from many members the Executive Committee cannot discharge its duties with the full knowledge of the general opinion of the Association as a whole which it must have to act most wisely. The close of the war has left us with so many new problems to face that in everything we do it is necessary to take count of stock of what we have, what is desired, and what we can do with our resources. The Association is obliged to answer these questions within a year or so. Its future depends upon answering them wisely. The most helpful information the Executive Committee can receive during the next few months will be statements from the members concerning just what they feel they should receive for their annual dues of five dollars. A large number of societies are now asking this question, for the greatly increased costs of conducting work of any kind have brought many of them, large as well as small, to a realization that they must count every penny and cut off every expense which does not produce results really useful to the members. The American Water Works

Association is not alone in facing this situation, for it has presented serious problems to great organizations like the American Society of Civil Engineers.

CARLETON E. DAVIS.

THE OPERATION OF SMALL PURIFICATION PLANTS

The consulting engineer who designs a water purification plant for the average small city should have a cheerful disposition and an optimistic outlook. Without these attributes he is likely to feel disappointed, or even bitter, at the treatment which this child of his brain will receive at the hands of the guardians to whose care its management is assigned. In Illinois we are now giving serious attention to the operation of the plants for treating water and sewage, because it leaves much to be desired in some cases, and there is evident need of arousing an interest among public officials generally in the desirability of competent control of such works. There is an unfortunate inclination to look upon them like tractors or trucks, as something which will work all right if the proper lubricant is occasionally squirted in the oil cups that can be reached easily.

We are beginning to encourage a policy of doing more than merely relying on the treatment of water as a safeguard against the pollution of municipal supplies. Purification plants owned by small cities cannot have the staff of trained experts to supervise their operation which a large plant possesses. There is a greater hazard or risk inevitable in the small plants and provision ought to be made against the extra hazard if it is practicable to do so. Life is just as valuable to the resident in a place of five thousand as to the resident in a metropolis, and therefore we should try to place about each of them sanitary safeguards of equal effectiveness. So in Illinois we are now attempting to persuade municipalities installing new water supplies to acquire control over the tributary watershed where this is practicable, and in all cases to maintain a watershed patrol which will reveal promptly any source of dangerous contamination of the water.

As a further step in improving the management of small plants for treating water and sewage, the State Department of Public Health is encouraging the practice of retaining the services of a consulting engineer on an annual-fee basis to supervise the operation of such works. The service needed can be rendered for a very small fee in most cases, and the plan is not only a great benefit to the munic-